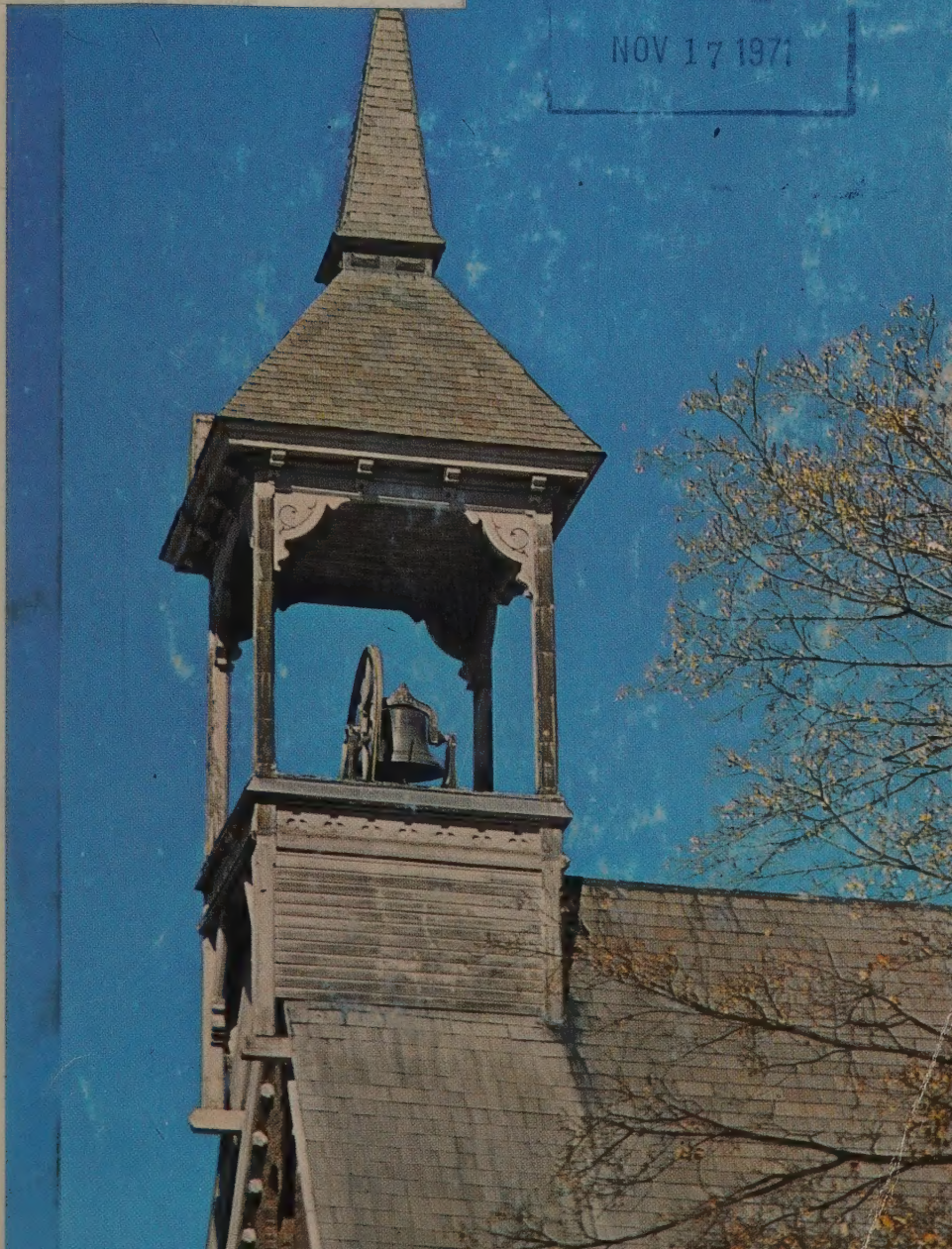
[redacted]

NOV 17 1971

DOCUMENT
COLLECTION



ARCHITECTURE WORTH SAVING
IN RENSSELAER COUNTY, NEW YORK

ARCHITECTURE WORTH SAVING
IN RENSSELAER COUNTY, NEW YORK

BY BERND FOERSTER M. ARCH
PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE

SPONSORED BY THE NEW YORK
STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PUBLISHED BY RENSSELAER POLY-
TECHNIC INSTITUTE, TROY, NEW YORK

WITHDRAWN
From EOU Library
Pierce Library
Eastern Oregon University
1410 L Avenue
La Grande, OR 97850

COVER: Tower of Baptist Church, Hoosick, 1869
FRONTISPIECE: Reference on pages 18 and 19

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG NUMBER 65-28154
COPYRIGHT 1965 SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, TROY, N. Y.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY CANTERBURY PRESS ROME, NEW YORK

DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR
DRAWING ON PAGE 52 BY JOHN G. WAITE, JR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
8	FOREWORD
11	INTRODUCTION
32	CITY OF TROY
88	COUNTY MAP
90	RENSSELAER COUNTY
186	COMMENTS
207	RECOMMENDED READING

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses his appreciation for the work of his assistant, Mr. John G. Waite, Jr. Among the many other people who have generously offered their help, the following individuals deserve special mention: Mrs. Henry P. Allen, Miss Marie L. Antolick, Mrs. Donald R. Bailey, Mr. Herbert A. Calkins, Mr. Rolland M. Carle, Mr. Werner L. Feibes, Mrs. Paul R. Frank, Mrs. Francis R. Hart, Mrs. Milton K. Hill, Mr. H. Maxson Holloway, Mr. Paul R. Huey, Mr. Louis F. Ismay, Miss Margaret Kinn, Mrs. Ernest Lindsey, Miss Mildred F. McChesney, Prof. Harley J. McKee, Prof. Donald Mochon, Mr. H. Irving Moore, Mr. Ralph D. Phillips, Mr. Franklyn E. Sanderson, Mrs. Jane D. Spoore, Mr. Joseph T. Sproule, Miss Christina Stevens, Mrs. Fannie Van Buren, Prof. James Grote Van Derpool. The author is grateful to the New York State Council on the Arts for the opportunity to do this project, and particularly to Mr. William Hull for his understanding and encouragement.

FOREWORD

This is the second architectural conservation study made and published with the support of the New York State Council on the Arts. Undoubtedly, the success of the first such Council-supported publication, *Architecture Worth Saving in Onondaga County,* has encouraged us to pursue a further examination of our architectural heritage.

As in the case of the prior study, the Council has requested an appraisal of the architectural character and an assessment of buildings prior to 1920 that should be preserved in Rensselaer County from the School of Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Such studies are intended as thoughtful guides for a type of planning concerned with the total character of a region.

Only recently have we begun to recognize the need for continuity in the architectural complexes that make up our communities. In solving the Twentieth Century needs of our urban centers we have destroyed many of our finest structures only to find the

much-heralded replacements often shoddy and superficial in both design and construction. The result has provided the paradox of a shallow environmental experience in a time of considerable economic affluence. Because of this, it would seem appropriate to determine the best buildings of our past and find a way to retain them in our future planning.

Studies such as these are, however, only the first steps in conserving this heritage. The compiling of catalogues, even by the most dedicated and knowledgeable students of the American architectural tradition, simply call our attention to those structures that should be conserved. The problems of architectural conservation are more complex than merely sparing a building from the wreckers' tools. Economic considerations and care amounting to curatorial concern do play important roles in any program of preservation. It is the intention of the Council to follow these studies with investigations of taxation, governmental protection, adaptive uses and preservation techniques for those structures we want to save.

A meaningful program in architectural conservation will be accomplished only by considering all of the problems of preservation. The effort would seem worthwhile for unless it is made, the expediency of contemporary economics may well reduce our architectural experience to a point of aesthetic nomadism which is an end product none of us wants since it does not suit our vision of the future.

WILLIAM HULL
Associate Director
New York State Council on the Arts

INTRODUCTION

There is no deliberate plan to destroy the architectural heritage of Rensselaer County. If such a conspiracy existed, it would probably not be nearly as effective, and an enraged citizenry would have risen to oppose it. Instead, the losses are caused by people who are not aware of the implications of their deeds, and by forces we have not yet learned to control.

Our attitudes have in many ways been influenced by the Western Frontier. A sense of abundance, and a history of using, discarding and moving on have fostered a belief in obsolescence and a lack of respect for environment. It is time to question this theory of abandon.

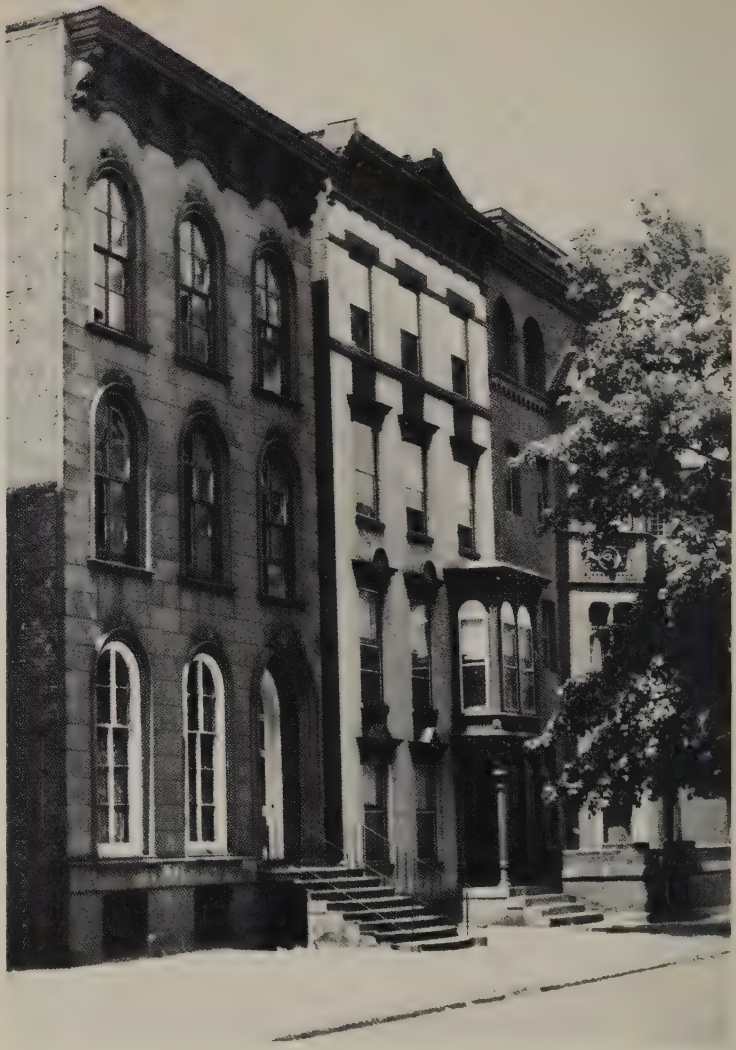
It is also time to challenge the theory of the split existence. The man who defiles his daily visual surroundings and tries to escape to the suburbs at night cannot leave vulgarity downtown. One cannot successfully lead an aesthetic double life.

Indifference causes us to spend major portions of our waking hours amid visual trash, and we have developed a defense mechanism by losing our ability to see. But along with shutting out the clutter, we have dulled our appreciation of the things that are worth observing, and we deny ourselves much visual enjoyment. This self inflicted blindness is largely responsible for our failure to recognize the treasures of the past that are still in our midst.

There is no sensible contradiction between wishing to spare good buildings and being a protagonist of contemporary architecture. All architecture belongs to its own time, and it is an historical necessity that our age does not mirror the past. The preservation of good buildings is a condition for the survival of the art of architecture. But the reasons for saving good buildings are more than aesthetic. Architecture is a reflection of the culture that created it, and it influences the civilization in which it exists. The quality of buildings and the character of neighborhoods are significant factors in determining personal and community attitudes.

Confidence in our ability to improve our living conditions need not result in a program to bulldoze the physical manifestations of history into oblivion. The choice is not between old and new: both are essential. The need is for recognition of values, and for judgment of quality.

The selection and publication of significant architecture has not been the final aim of this study. The real purpose is to encourage the restoration and preservation of buildings and groups of buildings of architectural value, whether or not they are included in this book. This volume is not a complete catalogue, but rather contains a listing of some examples in the hope of contributing to public awareness, interest and concern that will prevent needless destruction and stimulate thoughtful actions. The recording of fine buildings is important, but drawings, descriptions or photographs are never a substitute for real structures. The very nature of architecture as a four dimensional art requires the presence of the observer in and around the building. To enjoy architecture, it must be experienced, and to be experienced it must exist.



14 West side of Washington Park, Troy

In order to prevent the unnecessary destruction of good buildings it is helpful to take a look at some of the causes of such losses.

FIRES are usually the result of carelessness, neglect and vandalism. Many of the important buildings that have been lost through fire had previously been abandoned, and the burning of historical buildings could largely be prevented by removing other causes that will be mentioned, and by ordinary precautions.

DECAY is the result of neglect, misuse and vandalism. Surprisingly few buildings have to be demolished as a result of structural failures that cannot be repaired. Refusal to maintain buildings is frequently an economic decision. The cost of upkeep may not at all be prohibitive, but public policy makes slums rewarding, and taxation often penalizes what is best for the community. The cure lies in the enforcement of strict but fair building codes, and in new tax legislation that makes progress profitable. There is also a need to educate occupants.

GLUETT
BUILDING

ECONOMIC FACTORS are important in deciding the future of existing buildings, and it would be unreasonable to expect businesses to ignore the profit motive, but it is also in the interest of the individual enterprise to contribute to the well-being of the community. It is particularly desirable to scrutinize decisions that have adverse cultural effects to make sure that the advantages are not illusory. Many common assumptions need to be examined.

OBSOLESCENCE is used far more often than is justified as a reason for destruction. Buildings that have by no means outlived their usefulness are discarded to create an image of progress. Sometimes, changes are made at the loss of prestige that comes with a well-kept vintage building. A confusion of newness with quality is devastating to architecture because decisions to obliterate are irrevocable. Architecture is preculiarly the victim of fashion. Books and paintings can be rediscovered after centuries but when a building is destroyed the loss is permanent. Architecture cannot be stored.

In new construction, emphasis is often on immediate rather than on ultimate cost. When renovation of existing structures is compared with the expense of building, generalizations are frequently accepted without complete and unbiased analysis. Occasionally, the same people who insist on the very cheapest in new construction are surprisingly willing to be generous in the disposal of usable structures.

Like all art forms, architecture has many aspects that cannot be measured, but which are nonetheless real and significant. One might expect educators to be especially concerned with such values.

Of the schools in Hoosick Falls shown on the opposite page, the first was the Ball Academy whose brick columns provided the subject for the frontispiece of this book. It was built in 1843, and demolished in 1964. The second structure was built in the 1860s as the Wood Mansion, and enlarged as a high school in 1927. It is still standing in 1965, but has been abandoned, and the process of slow destruction is well under way.

he Rynaldo building, which served as a dormitory for Russell
ge College, was famous for "The Window." It has been torn
own to make room for a new dormitory.

REMODELING AND ADDITION are responsible for the destruction of many historical structures. It is difficult to alter buildings, yet changes are frequently made without recognition of the problems involved.

Before extensive alterations were made, the house shown above was one of the few remaining examples of early Dutch architecture. Important historic landmarks should be protected by laws that consider the owner and the public interest.

Pierce Library
Eastern Oregon University
1410 L Avenue
La Grande, OR 97850

CAHILL'S
What's the Geneseecret???
GENESEE
GENESEE
Lightness with flavor!!!
JIFFY KING
SUBMARINES

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING is a monument to greed that we should not tolerate indiscriminately. Honky tonk can be limited to appropriate areas. Excessive signs make architecture invisible, give the appearance of blight, and defeat the purpose for which each sign is installed. Necessary identification can be tasteful and effective, and when the clutter is removed, respectable buildings may be revealed.

ADVERSE SURROUNDINGS can destroy a building as surely as a wrecking ball, though not necessarily as permanently. A supermarket changes the feeling of a residential district, and a farm house that once stood lonely under an endless sky looks different when engulfed by suburbia. Many changes are unavoidable, and many are desirable, but decisions should be made consciously rather than by default. Adjacent structures, commercial chaos, nearby spaces, landscaping or its absence, all such elements profoundly affect the appreciation of a building. Many works of architecture remain unnoticed because of the condition of the neighborhood. The church tower is visible but hardly noticed in the general view of Wyantskill.

FAILURES IN ZONING are responsible for much ugliness, and it is necessary to adopt and enforce reasonable and effective zoning laws. The house shown above stands in the center of Poestenkill, a town whose charm has been made known by the Nineteenth Century painter Joseph H. Hidley.

Immediately across the street – also facing the main intersection – is a junk yard. The building behind it is a school, and the community may well teach its children more about neatness and civic pride on the way into the building than it is possible to correct in the classroom.

URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS—wisely planned and humanely implemented—are essential in many of our urban areas, but it is important to distinguish between mere change and genuine improvement. Bulldozer and wrecking ball only assure removal, and there is a need for concern with the effects of each program. An alert citizenry can protect its heritage.

The first urban renewal project in Troy calls for the demolition of these brownstone structures. They are all occupied, and have been or can be renovated. Because of their character, height and color they are important to the street. They are on the edge of the project, and do not interfere with the stated objectives of the renewal program. Concerned citizens may succeed in saving them.

ARTERIAL HIGHWAYS are an exciting part of our new society, yet they and their approaches, interchanges, overpasses and other associated constructions are also responsible for the destruction of historic buildings. If not carefully planned, they can become visual and physical barriers that divide established neighborhoods and separate community functions that need close association. The difficulty lies in the dominance of practical considerations of traffic engineering, construction and land acquisition in preference to civic and human concerns.

PRESERVATIONISTS can mistakenly equate age with quality, although it must be admitted that even a mediocre building can be worth saving if its kind is nearly extinct. A more serious problem is incompetent alteration in the name of restoration.

There is need for legislation to prevent the destruction of officially designated landmarks. Such laws would also make it more difficult to extort excessive payments from public spirited citizens.

THE HISTORY of Rensselaer County is rich, but many buildings of historical or anecdotal interest have little architectural significance, and are not shown here. The project from which this book resulted was not an historical study based on an extensive search of archives, but rather an evaluation of existing structures. It is impossible to make an investigation of this kind without constantly running into fascinating historical references. Rensselaer County was not only settled at an early time, it continued to play an important role, and everywhere one encounters fragments of a great past. It was difficult not to be diverted from the architectural nature of the project, but there was no staff skilled in the disciplines of historical research, and it was not possible to verify stories connected with numerous structures and locations.

The great events that touched this region left marks that are effectively—though often unknowingly—being erased. This book does not advocate nostalgia or resistance to change. The historical examples teach courage and willingness to accept the new, but they also teach possibilities of adaptation.

STYLES have generally not been mentioned in this study because they are ill defined, confusingly applied, and not especially useful. Many good buildings defy simple classification, and this investigation was concerned with quality rather than labels.

SELECTION of the buildings that are included in this book has been difficult. While the study was extensive, the limitations of publication have made it necessary to omit many buildings of architectural merit that should be preserved, and there are numerous undistinguished structures that should be saved because they happen to be part of a successful grouping. A considerable number of buildings are not included because of their condition at the time of the survey, but improvements or minor restorations would make these structures excellent indeed. Since many fine buildings had to be excluded with the greatest reluctance, it can in no way be inferred that buildings in Rensselaer County that are not shown in this volume are necessarily inferior to those presented.

CITY OF TROY

The City of Troy is located on the Hudson, but the potential beauty of this river has not yet been used to benefit the town. Troy has dramatic hills, but the city has not yet taken full advantage of them.

Troy has vacant properties, skilled labor, and excellent educational institutions, but it has been slow to attract new industries. Troy has a rich history as an industrial and cultural center, but for decades it has lacked self-confidence and vision. Troy has citizens who are capable of leadership, but who have not yet discovered one another, or their power to make the difference in determining their future.

Troy has some fine buildings, and many good structures that can form the nucleus for a remarkable city, but it has not yet learned to protect its treasures, or to add to them.

Troy has forgotten what it was, and not yet seen what it can be. The following pages contain some examples of its architecture that have too frequently been overlooked.

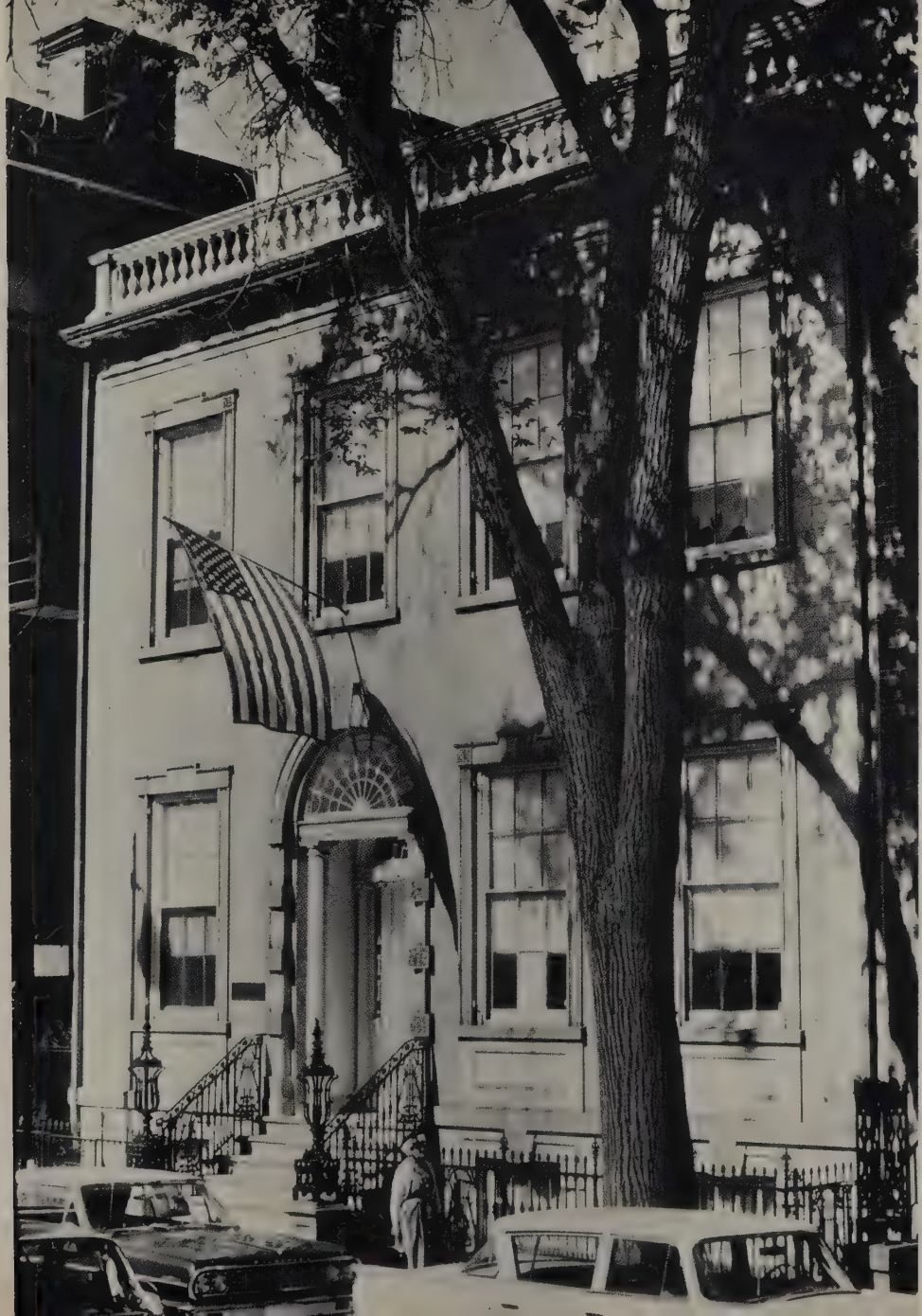
VAIL HOUSE—46 First Street
built in 1818; original owner: George Vail
additions in 1842 by Withers & Dickson, architects
residence of president of Russell Sage College
notable stairway and furniture

CONGRESS STREET SQUARE

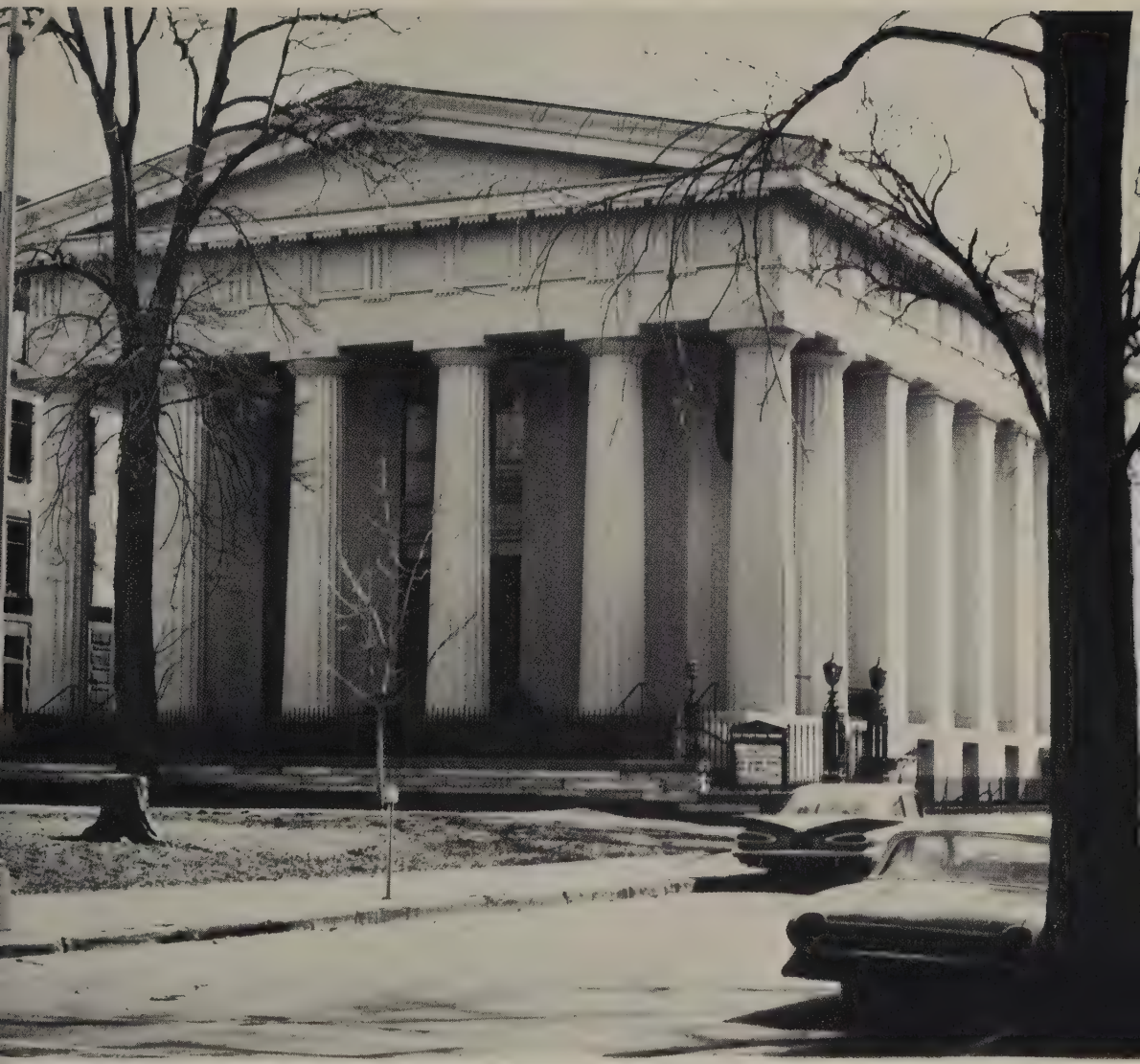
Russell Sage College owns several fine Nineteenth Century houses

662 Second Avenue, Lansingburgh
possibly built in the 1820s
original owner: Townsend

CLUETT HOUSE—59 Second Street
Rensselaer County Historical Society
built in 1927; Philip Hooker, architect
original owner: Richard P. Hart



BELDING HOUSE—9 Brunswick Road
facade in late 1830s on house built in 1789
owner from 1834–54: Dennis Belding



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Congress Street Square
completed in 1836

YMCA

ATHENAEUM—YMCA—10 First Street
completed in 1846
original owner: Troy Savings Bank

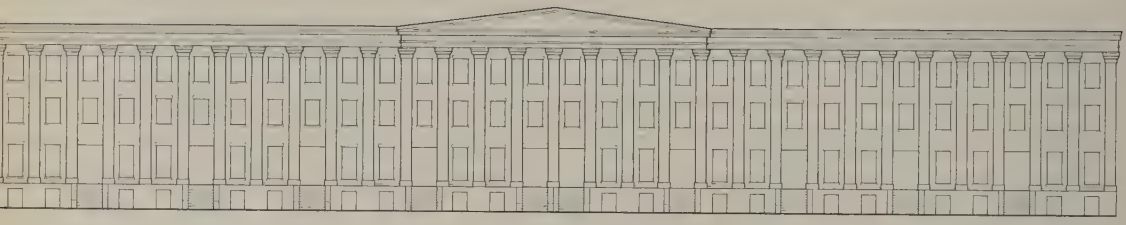
638 Third Avenue, Lansingburgh
completed in 1846
original owner: James van Schoonhoven

2167 Fifth Avenue
built ca 1860

118th Street at First Avenue, Lansingburgh
built in the 1860s
original owner: David Judson

WALE GURLEY

GURLEY'S MAIN BUILDING – 1900–1912 Fifth Avenue
built in 1862 as factory of scientific instruments
original owner: W. & L. E. Gurley Co.



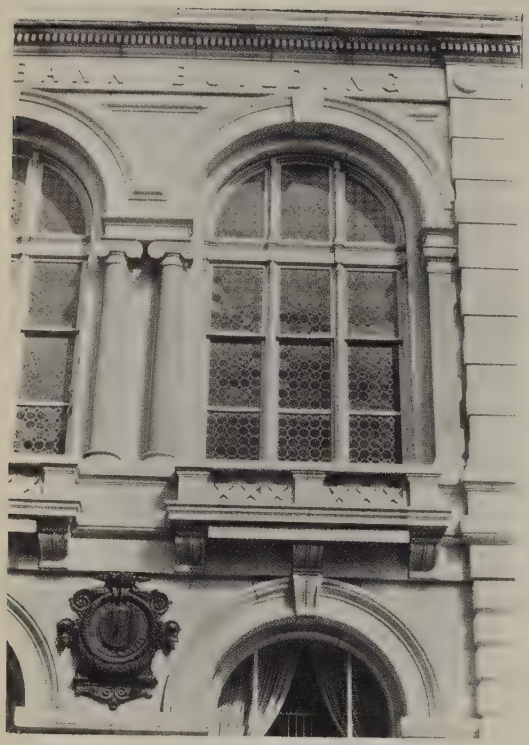
WASHINGTON PARK was laid out in about 1840. The South side of the square was built as a unit in the 1840s as shown in the drawing, but has been altered substantially. The building on the far right was built on the North side ca 1863 for iron magnate John Winslow.

ADAMS MANSION – 278 Pawling Avenue
built ca 1870
original owner: Louis Potter

WARREN BUILDING – River Street at Broadway
built in 1870 – cast iron front

FOUNDED
1809.

OLD GAS HOUSE—Jefferson Street at Fifth Avenue
built in 1873
original owner: Troy Gas-Light Co.



TROY SAVINGS BANK and MUSIC HALL
Second and State Streets
built 1870–75; Charles Post, architect
original owner: Troy Savings Bank
acoustics among best in the United States

TROY
SAVINGS
BANK
TIME
12 15

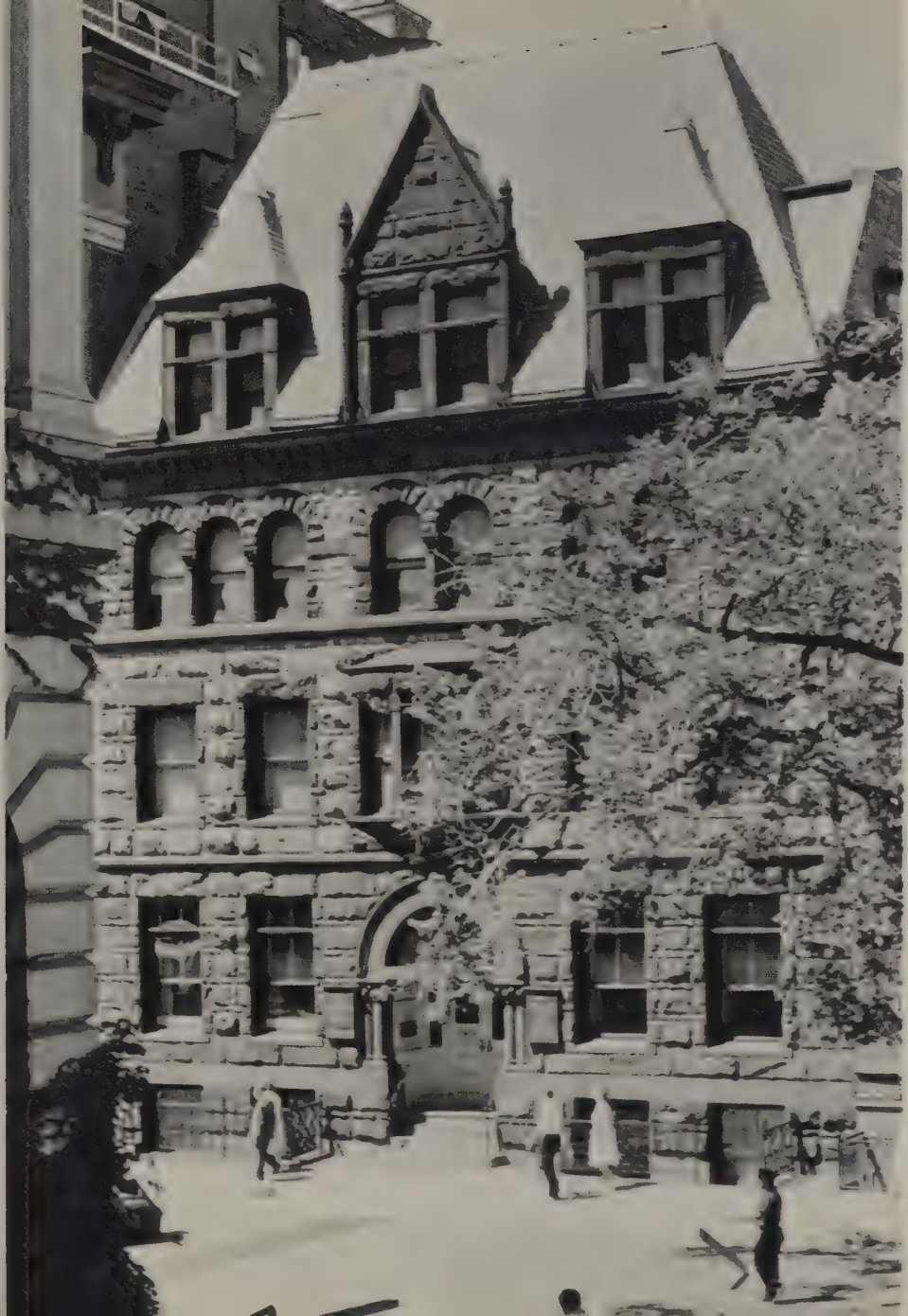
OLD MUTUAL NATIONAL BANK—First and State Streets
built as Farmers' Bank in the 1820s
renovated in 1882 by the Mutual National Bank

FIREHOUSE, Hope #7
Pawling Avenue at Ford Street
built in 1882

LION SHIRT BUILDING
750 Second Avenue, Lansingburgh
built in 1884 and expanded in 1898

BURDEN IRON COMPANY OFFICE
West end of Polk Street
built after 1881

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST
33 Second Street
built in 1891; M. F. Cummings, architect
original owner: Young Women's Association



PI KAPPA PHI HOUSE—49 Second St.
built in 1892; T. F. Schneider, architect
original owner: John W. Paine

CONWAY HOUSE—1 Conway Court, Sycaway
probably built in the 1890s
original owner: Daniel E. Conway

FREAR MANSION—65 Second Street
built in 1892; Stanford White, architect
original owner: Mayor Kemp

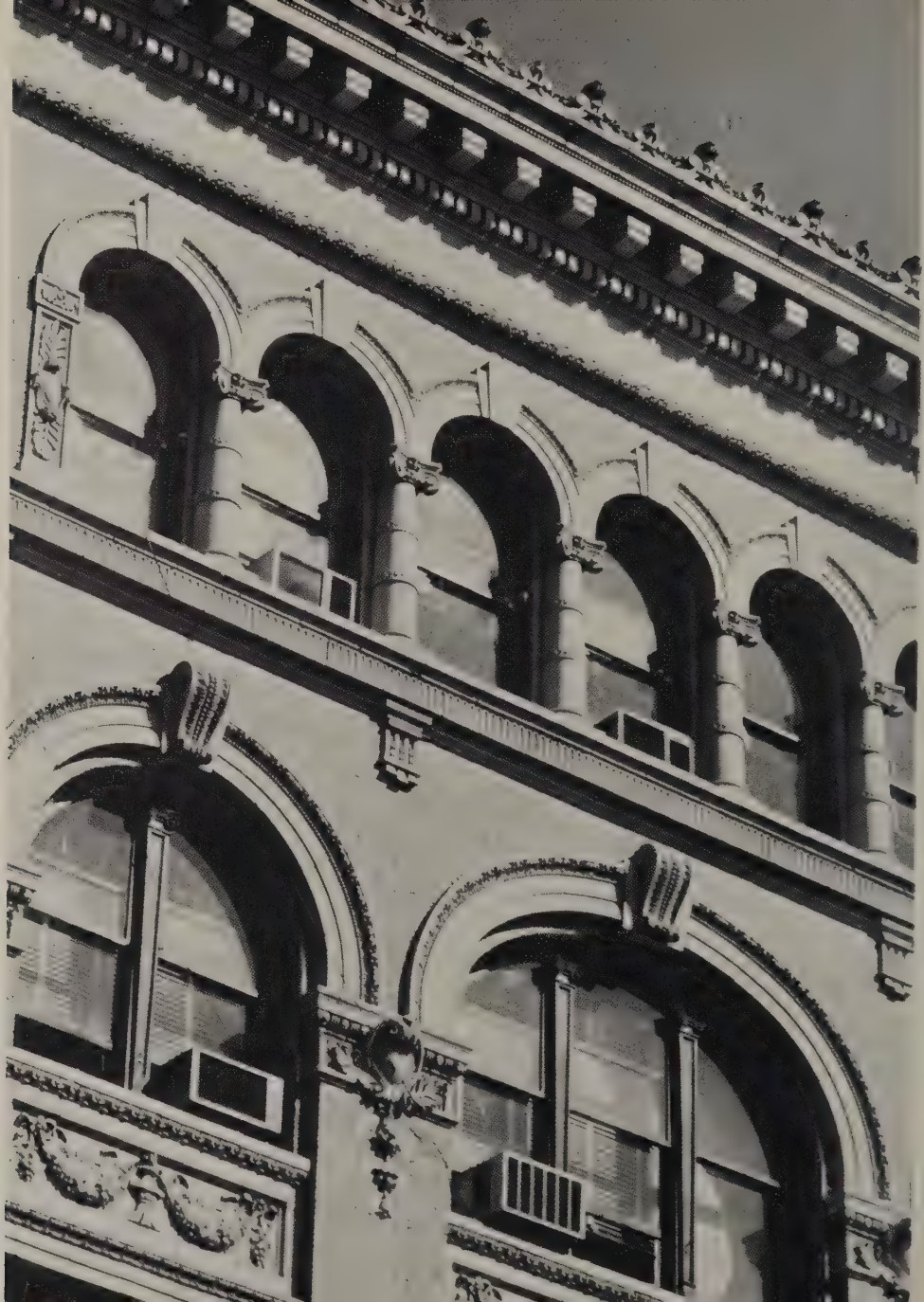
FIREHOUSE, Farnam #5
Pawling Avenue at Brunswick Road
built in 1894; Henry P. Fielding, architect

5

PUBLIC LIBRARY – 100 Second Street
built in 1897; J. Stewart Barney, architect
original owner: Troy Public Library

MEMORIAL
LIB

MILL ON THE POESTENKILL – Spring Avenue vicinity
built ca 1900 – original owner: Andrew Ruff



297 River Street at Fulton Street
built in 1904
original owner: National State Bank

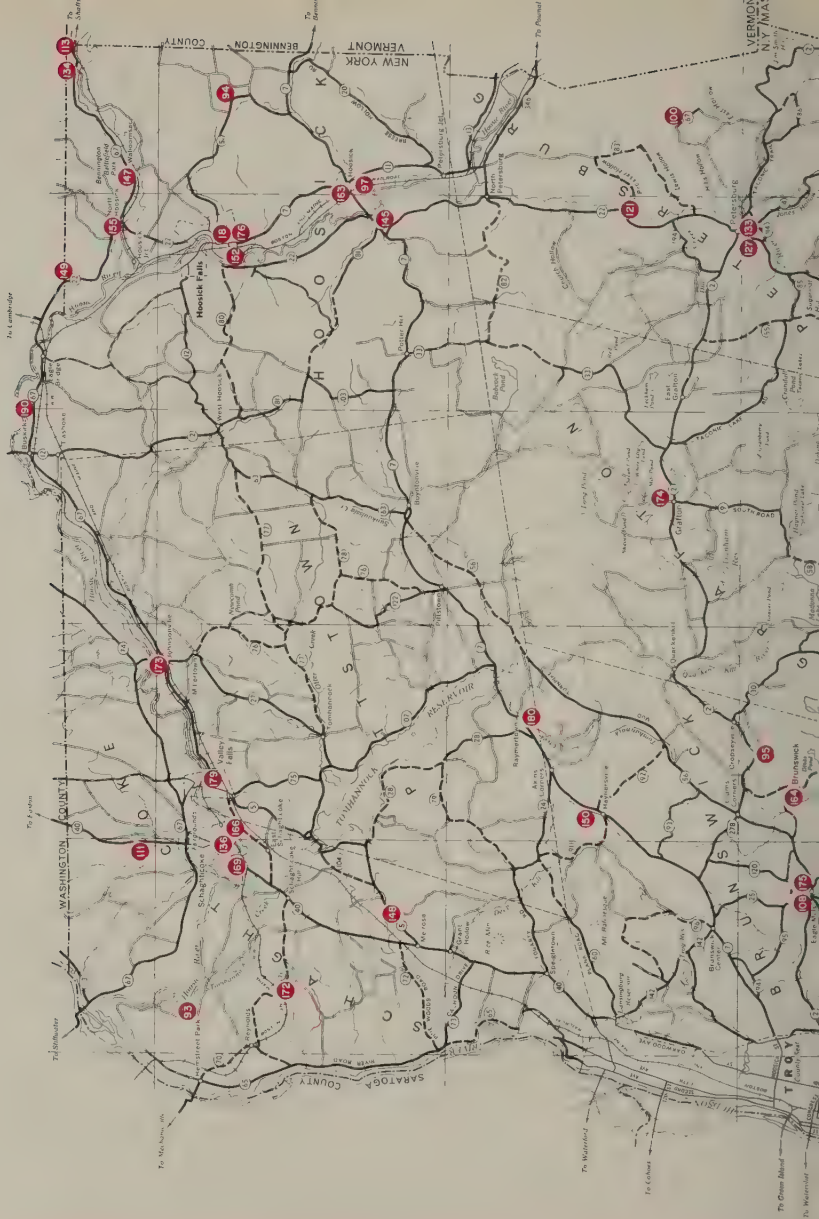
McCARTHY BUILDING—225–229 River Street
built in 1904; Charles P. Boland, builder
original owner: McCarthy

ILIUM BUILDING—Fourth and Fulton Streets
built in 1904
original owner: Ilium Realty Co. (Edward Murphy)

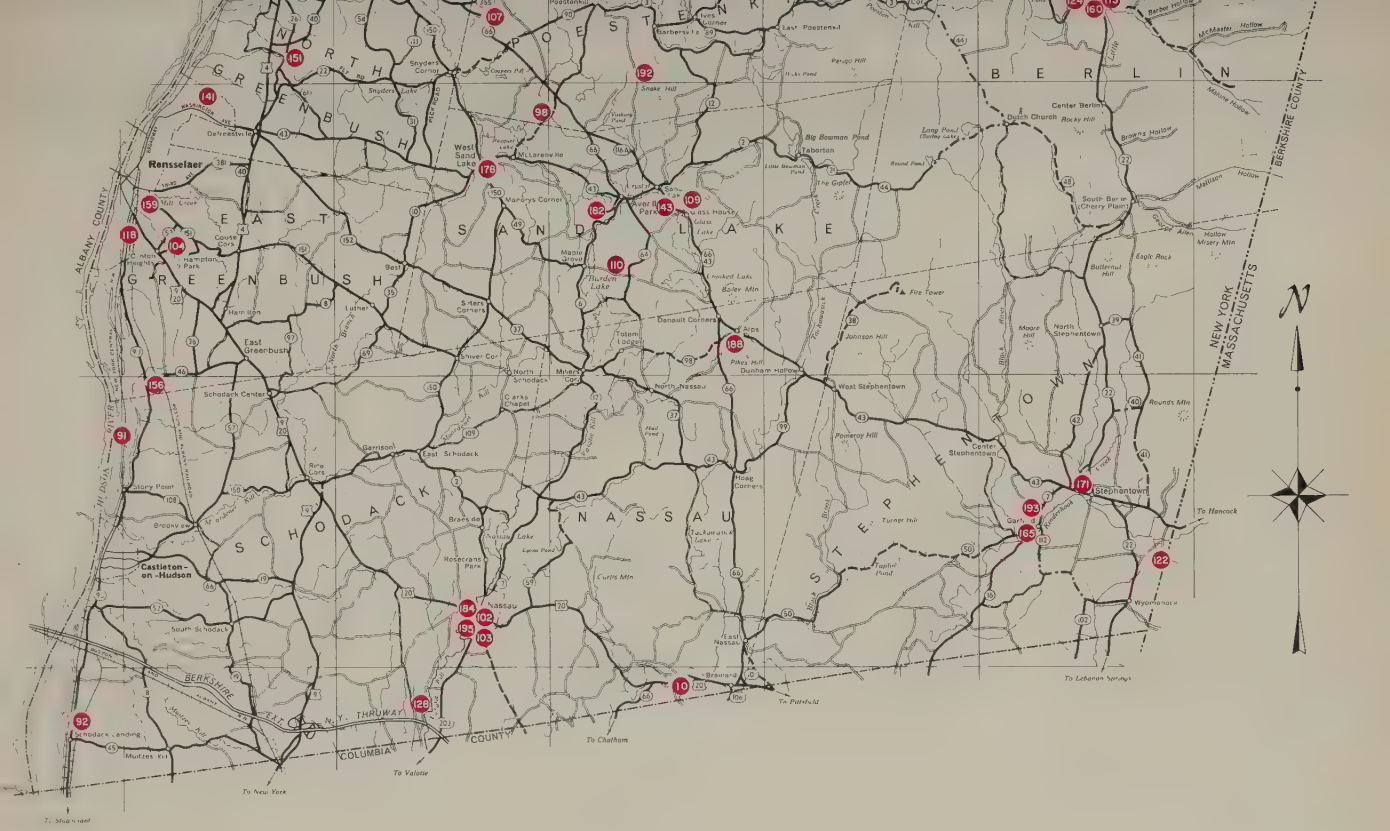
CALDWELL APARTMENTS – 17 State Street
built ca 1907
original owner: Rensselaer Improvement Corporation

EMMA WILLARD SCHOOL—Pawling Avenue
built in 1910; M. F. Cummings & Son, architects
original owner: Emma Willard School for girls

WHITE and HUNT DORMITORIES—15th Street
built in 1916; Lawlor & Haase, architects
original owner: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute



● – Numbers indicate location and designate pages on which specific buildings are described and/or shown.


NORTH GREENBUSH
EAST GREENBUSH
SCHODACK
NASSAU
STEPHENTOWN
BERLIN
POESTENKILL
SAND LAKE
Rensselaer
Castleton-on-Hudson
Schodack Center
East Greenbush
East Schodack
North Schodack
Nassau
Stephentown
Center Stephentown
Center Berlin
West Sand Lake
Snyders Corner
Poestenkill
Barberville
Snake Hill
Tabortan
Big Bowman Pond
Dutch Church
Rocky Hill
Browns Hollow
Eagle Rock
Bullard Hill
Fire Tower
Johnson Hill
Moore Hill
North Stephentown
Rounds Mtn
Pomeroy Hill
Turner Hill
Dunham Hollow
Pikes Hill
Totem Lodge
Benault Corners
Maple Grove
Manorys Corner
Mineral Springs
Carks Chapel
Garrison
Hoag Corners
Curtis Mtn
Reservation Park
Hampton Manor
Hill Crest
Coutse Corners
Hart Hill
Harrison
Lutheran
Best
Shiver Corners
Stiers Corners
Hudson Lake
Mayer Hill
Bayer Mtn
Maple Grove
Round Pond
Long Pond (Burley Lake)
Little Bowman Pond
The Gable
Eagle Hill
Mill Creek
Kinderhook Creek
Hudson River
Schodack Creek
Papscanee Island
Stony Point
Brookview
Brabant
Lake Taghkanic
Taghkanic Pond
Wyomanock
Mt. Lebanon
Mt. Lebanon Springs
To Hancock
To Partridge
To Chatham
To Valatie
To New York
To Albany
ALBANY COUNTY
RENSSELAER COUNTY
COLUMBIA COUNTY
BERKSHIRE COUNTY
NEW YORK
MASSACHUSETTS
BERKSHIRE
N.Y. THRUWAY
Schodack Landing
Muitzes Kill
Moordener Kill
Kinderhook Creek
Hudson River

RENSSELAER COUNTY

STAATS HOUSE, Schodack, West of 9J

The house has a commanding view of the Hudson River. The romantically overgrown masonry walls are in the 17th Century portion of the structure which has 18th and 19th century additions. The youngest occupants reputedly belong to the 12th generation of the Staats family that has lived in the house.

TEN EYCK HOUSE, Schodack, 9 J near Schodack Landing
built prior to 1770. A similar building is nearby.

KNICKERBACKER MANSION, Schaghticoke, near Hoosic River
built ca 1770, is being restored by the Knickerbocker
Historical Society, and serves as a museum

FRASER TRADING POST, Hoosick, 51
built ca 1772 by Hugh Fraser, whose son Simon,
explorer of the Canadian North West, was born here

McCHESNEY HOUSE, Brunswick, South Road at 7
built ca 1780 on the McChesney farm. An earlier house
built in the 1740s, is in poor condition on the site

HENRY BREESE FARM, Hoosick, 11
reportedly built in 1787; porch added in 1830s

REICHARD FARM, Sand Lake, Reichard Lake Road
reputedly built in 1790, original owner: Barnard Rijkert
has fan like exterior trim above windows

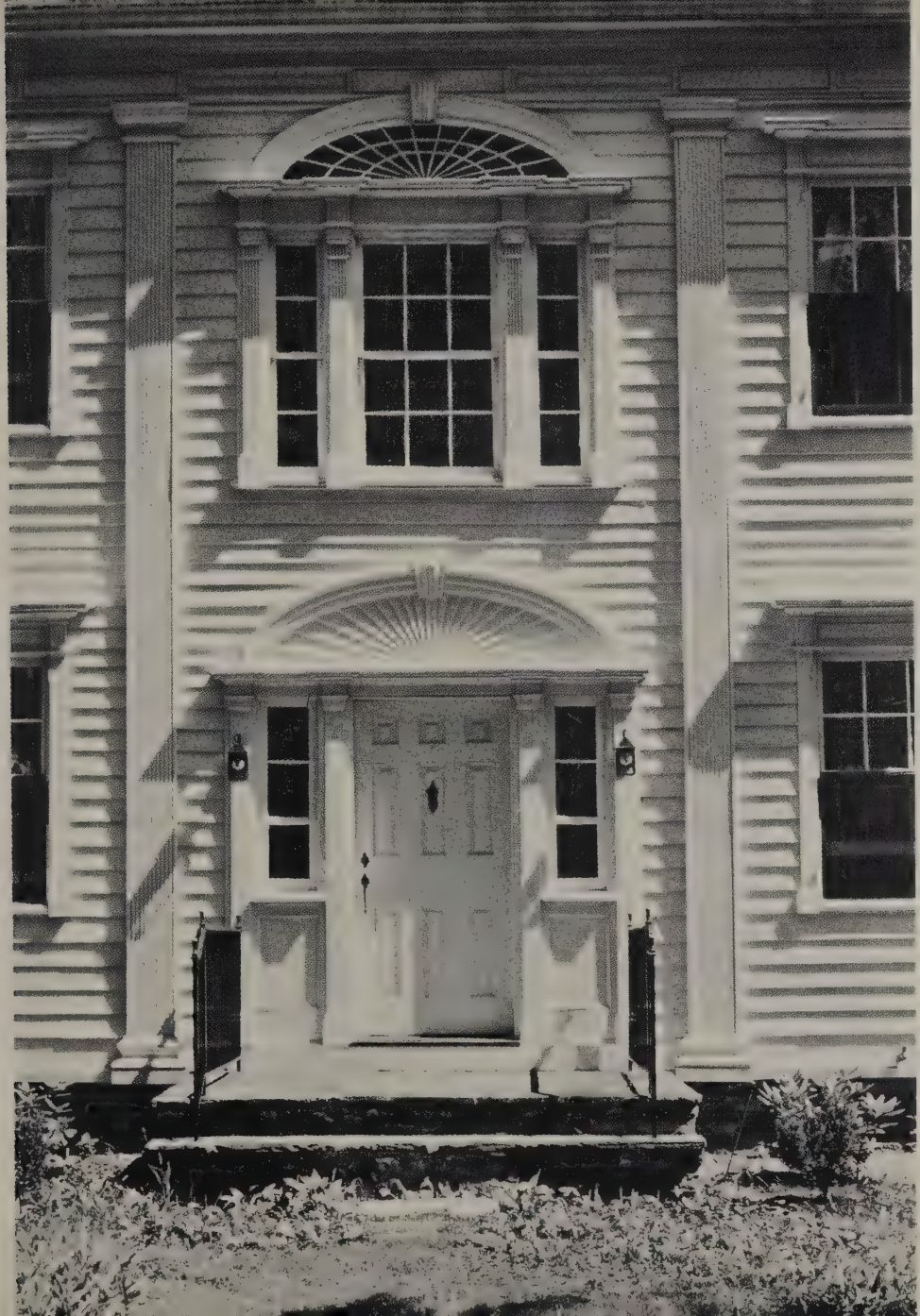
PLANK HOUSE, Petersburg, end of Hills Hollow
built in 1791; original owner: Main
remarkable central fireplace—new siding—
detail is of weathered original plank door

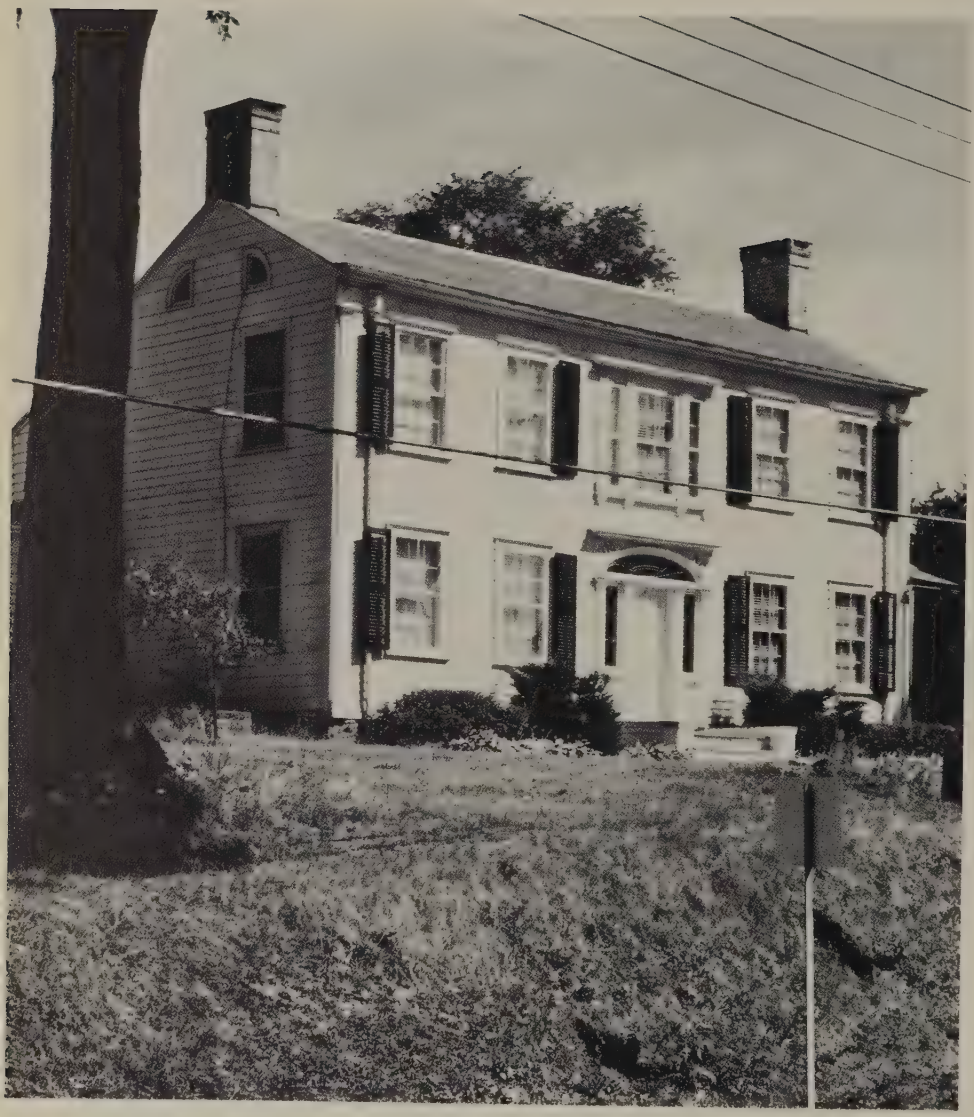
VINCENT HOUSE, Nassau (village) 51 Church Street
built in 1793; possible original owner: Elias Howe

HOMESTEAD HOTEL, Nassau (village) 6 Church Street
built about 1792; original owner: Jonathan Hoag

CANTONMENT FARM, East Greenbush, Hampton Park
built in 1790s; used as barracks and dungeon during
War of 1812, and presently contains apartments

BROAD LANDS FARM, Poestenkill, 66
may have been built around 1800



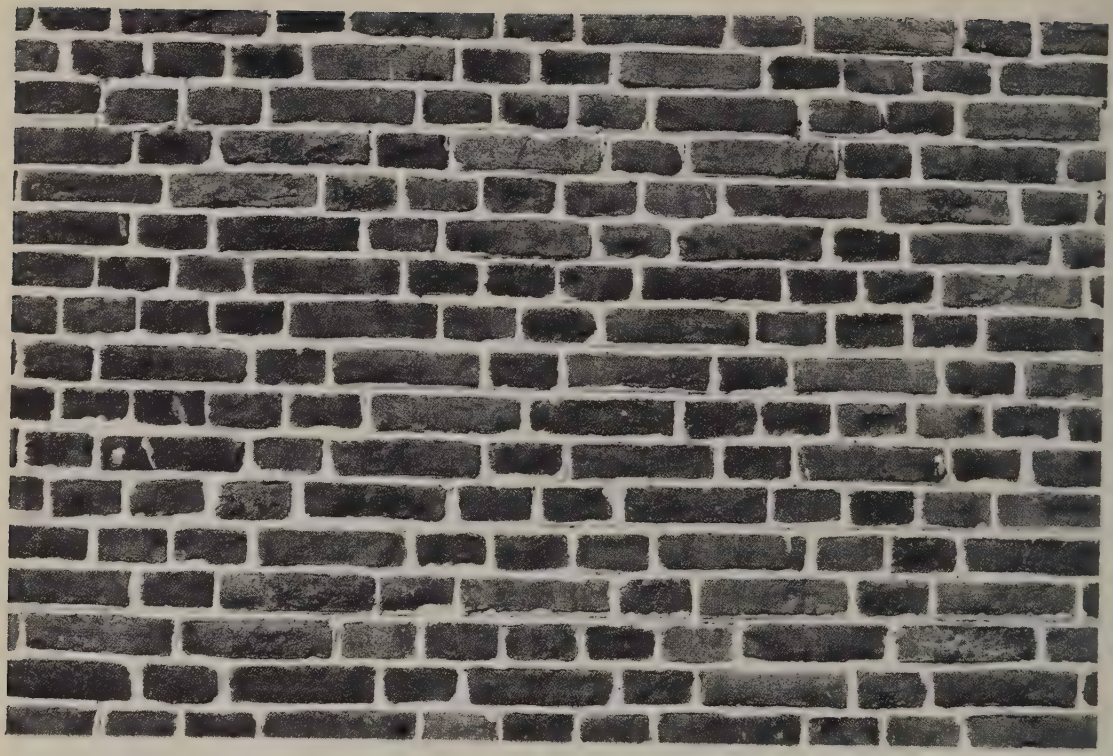


DATER HOUSE, Brunswick, Eagle Mills, 567 Brunswick Road
built in 1798; second owner: Philip P. Dater

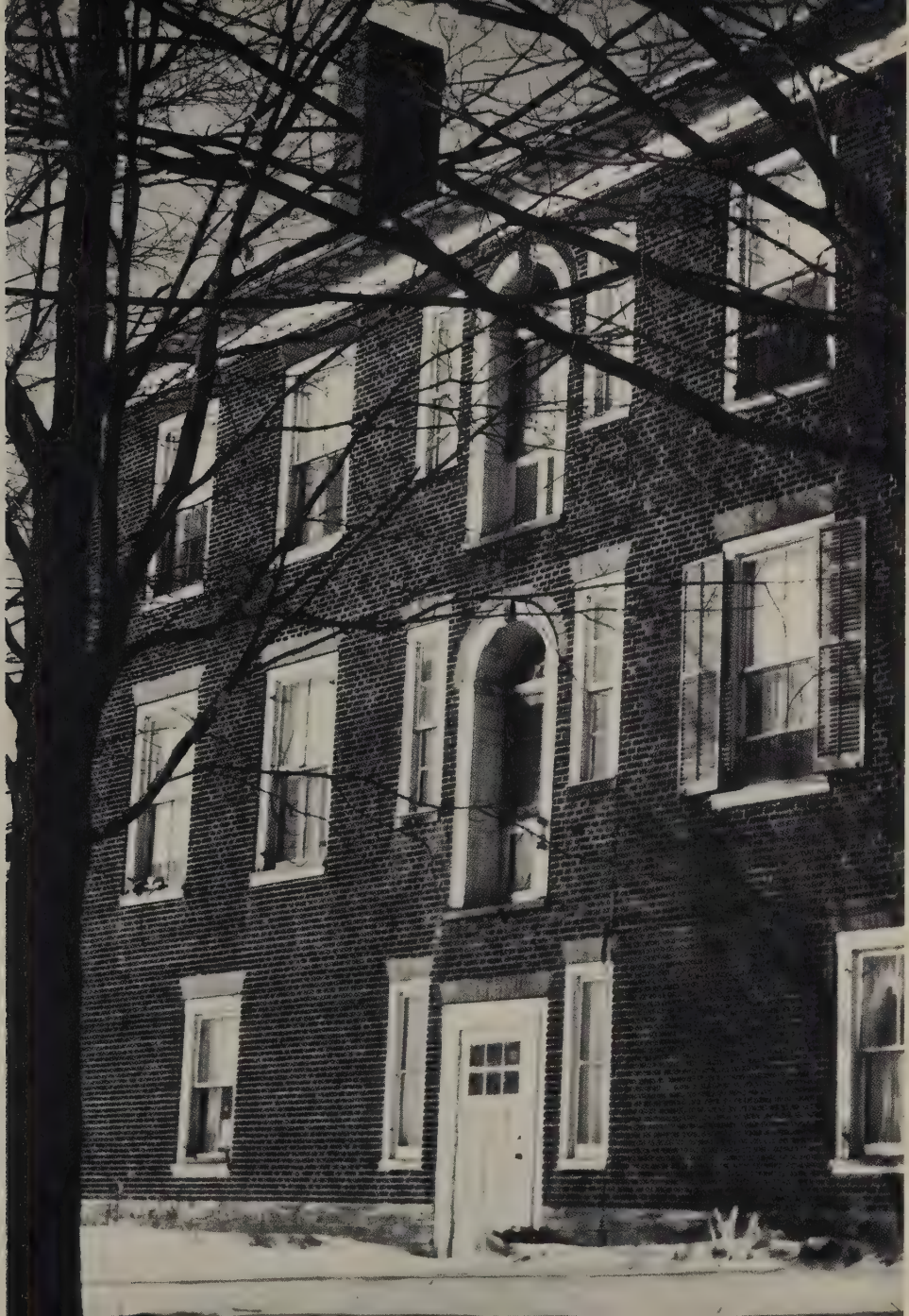
KNOWLSON HOUSE, Sand Lake, Glass House, East of 43 and 66
built about 1800; original owner: Andrew B. Knowlson

STONE FARM, Sand Lake, First Dike Road, East of Maple Grove
built in 1801; original owner: Hogle

ANTOLICK HOUSE, Schaghticoke, West of Route 40
built around 1800; original owner: Kenyon



STATE LINE HOUSE, Hoosick, 67, on Vermont border
built in 1802; original owner: Captain David Mathews



DR THOMPSON HOUSE, Berlin (village), Main Street
built after 1806

KINN'S CORNER STORE, Berlin (village), Main Street
reputedly built in 1818; original owner: Lewis

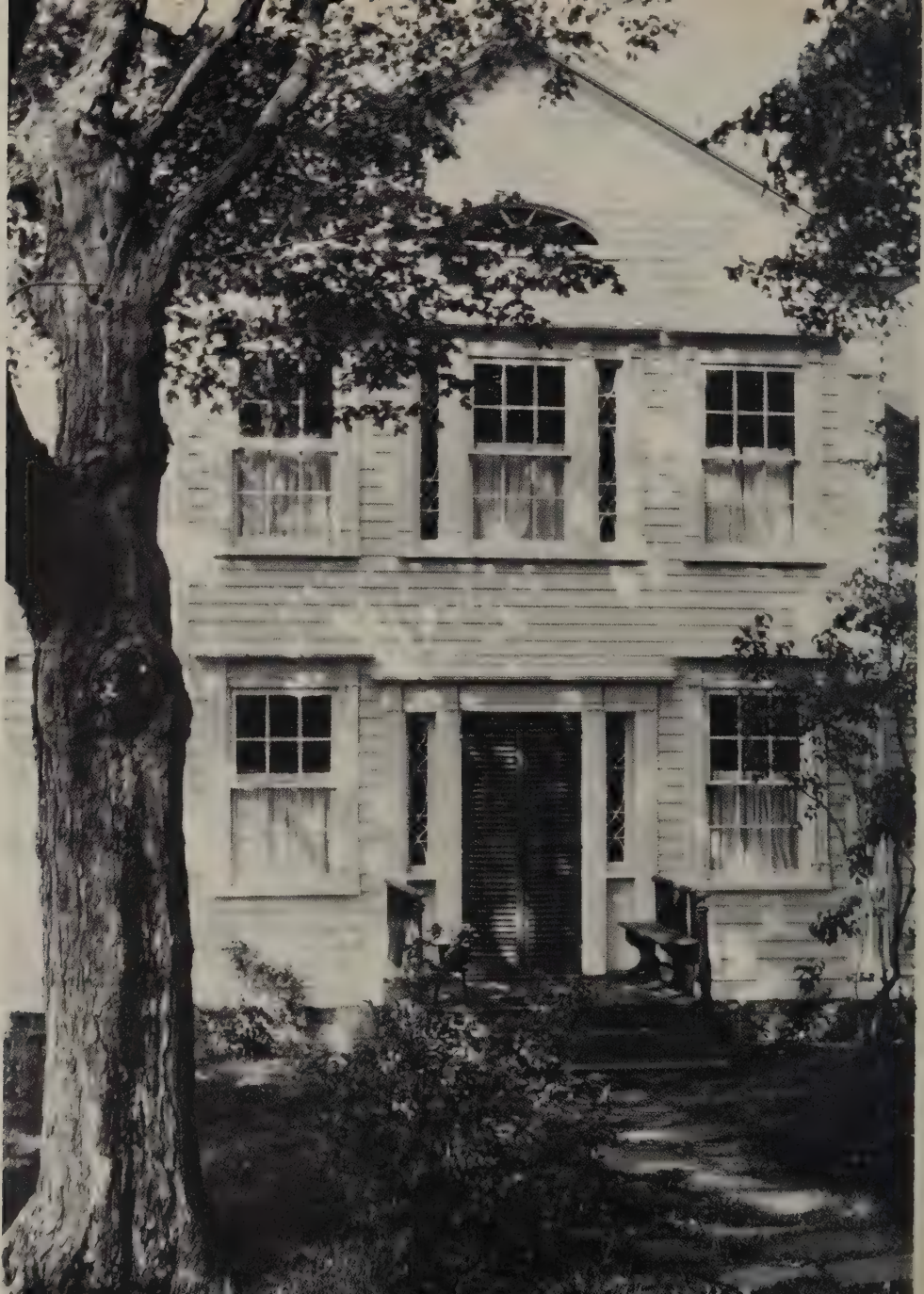
AIKEN HOUSE, Rensselaer, Broadway and Aiken Avenue
built in 1818 for William Aiken, founder of the
village of Greenbush, now the City of Rensselaer

DOUBLE ROAD CROSSING FARM, Petersburg, 22
probably built in 1820s; original owner: Elijah Reynolds

DOUGLASS HOUSE, Stephentown, East of 22 and South of 43
built in 1824; original owner: William Douglass II

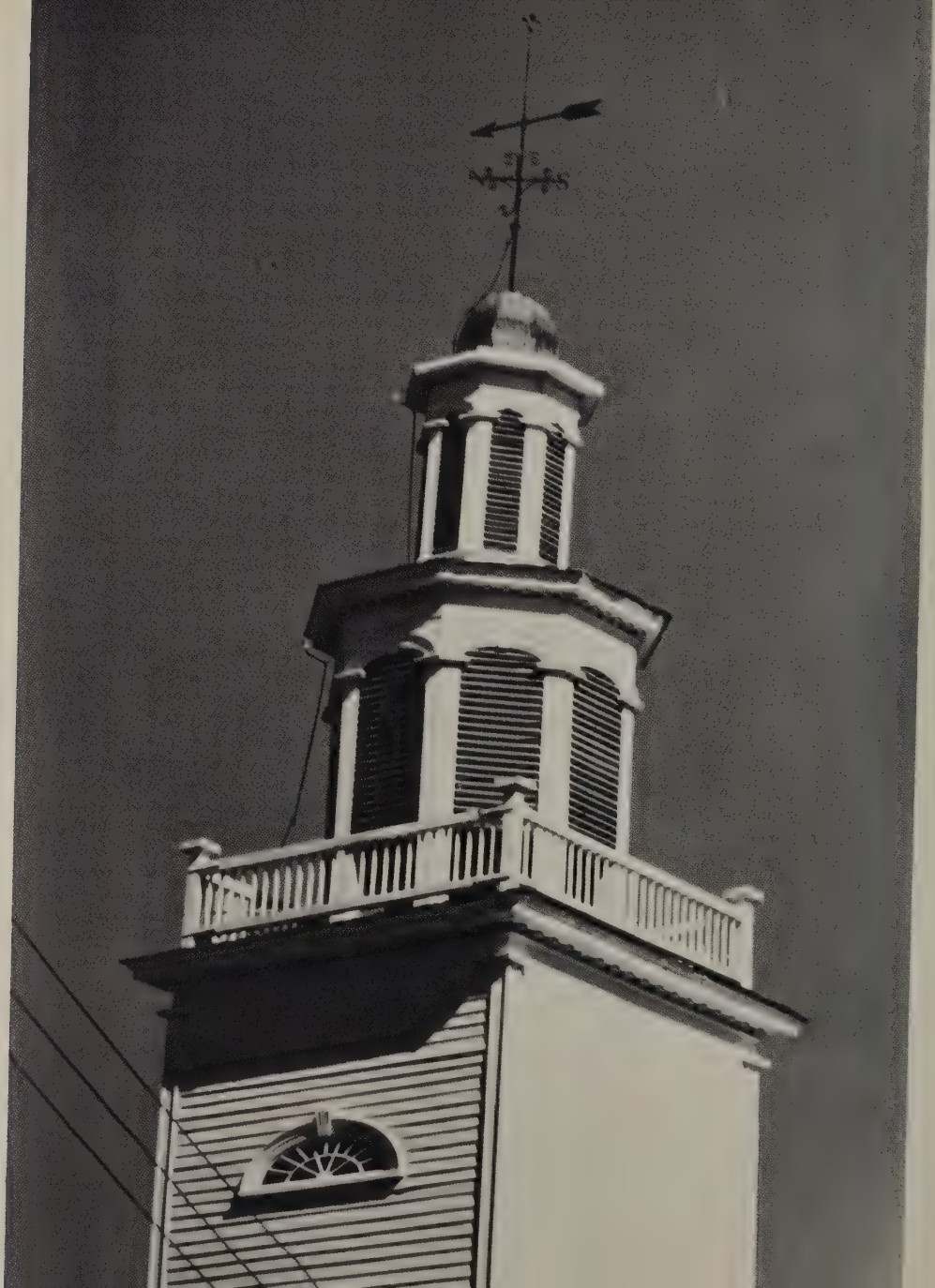
SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST CHURCH, Berlin (village), North Main St.
dedicated in 1824; belfry added in 1848

DR. MOSES HOUSE, Petersburg (village), 22
built in 1825
corners between pilasters reminiscent of quoins



BUDD FARM, Schodack, Bunker Hill Road
built about 1825; original owner: E. Budd

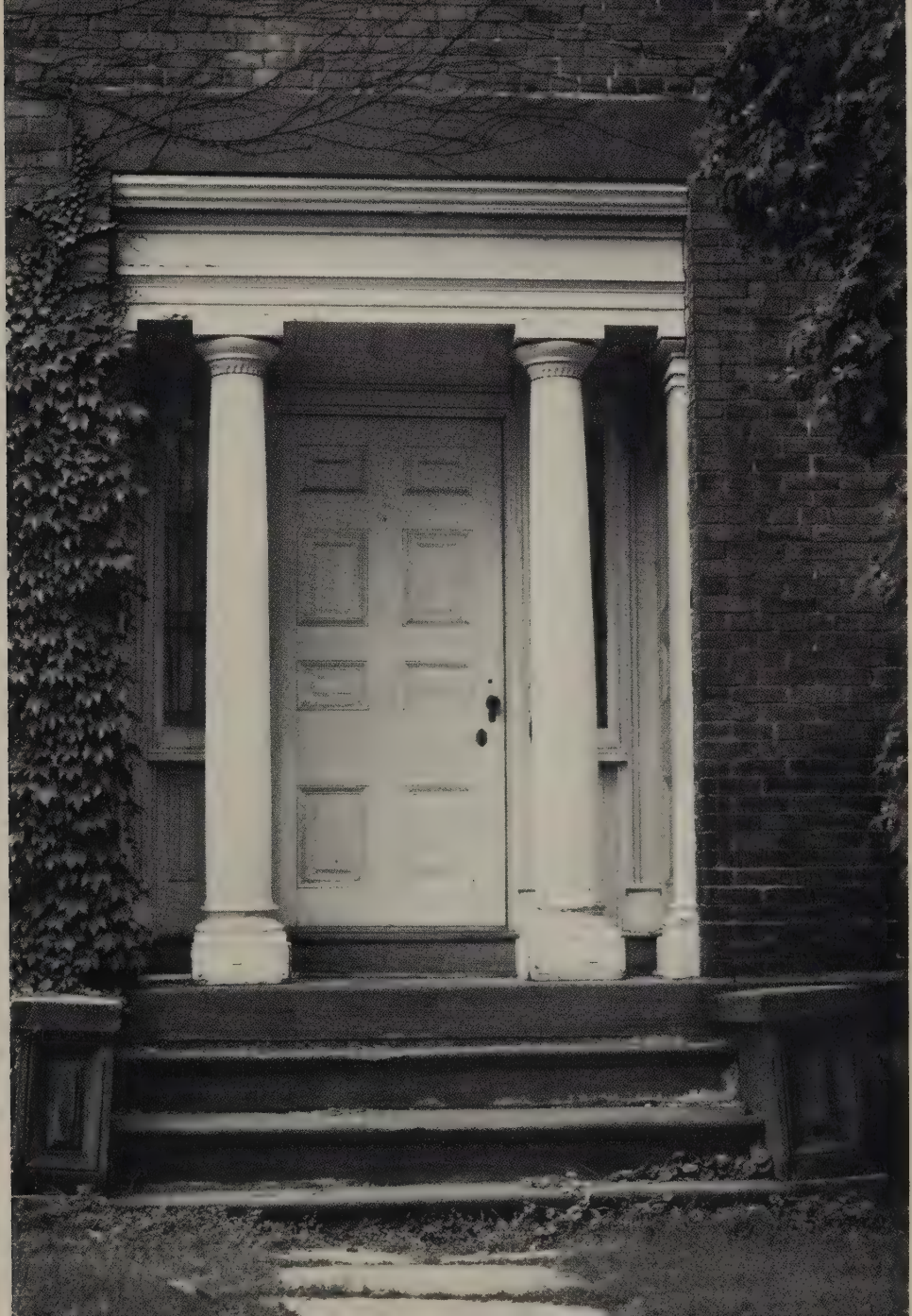
KING'S GRANT FARM, Brunswick, Dater Hill Road
built in 1827; original owner: Martin Springer



BAPTIST CHURCH, Petersburg (village), 22
built ca 1828

FLOOD FARM, Hoosick, 67
built ca 1830; original owner: Hiram Sweet

FILM HOUSE, Schaghticoke (village)
built ca 1830; original owner: Briggs



DOCTOR'S OFFICE, Berlin, 22, site of Ranch Tavern
built in 1834 in village of Berlin (moved)

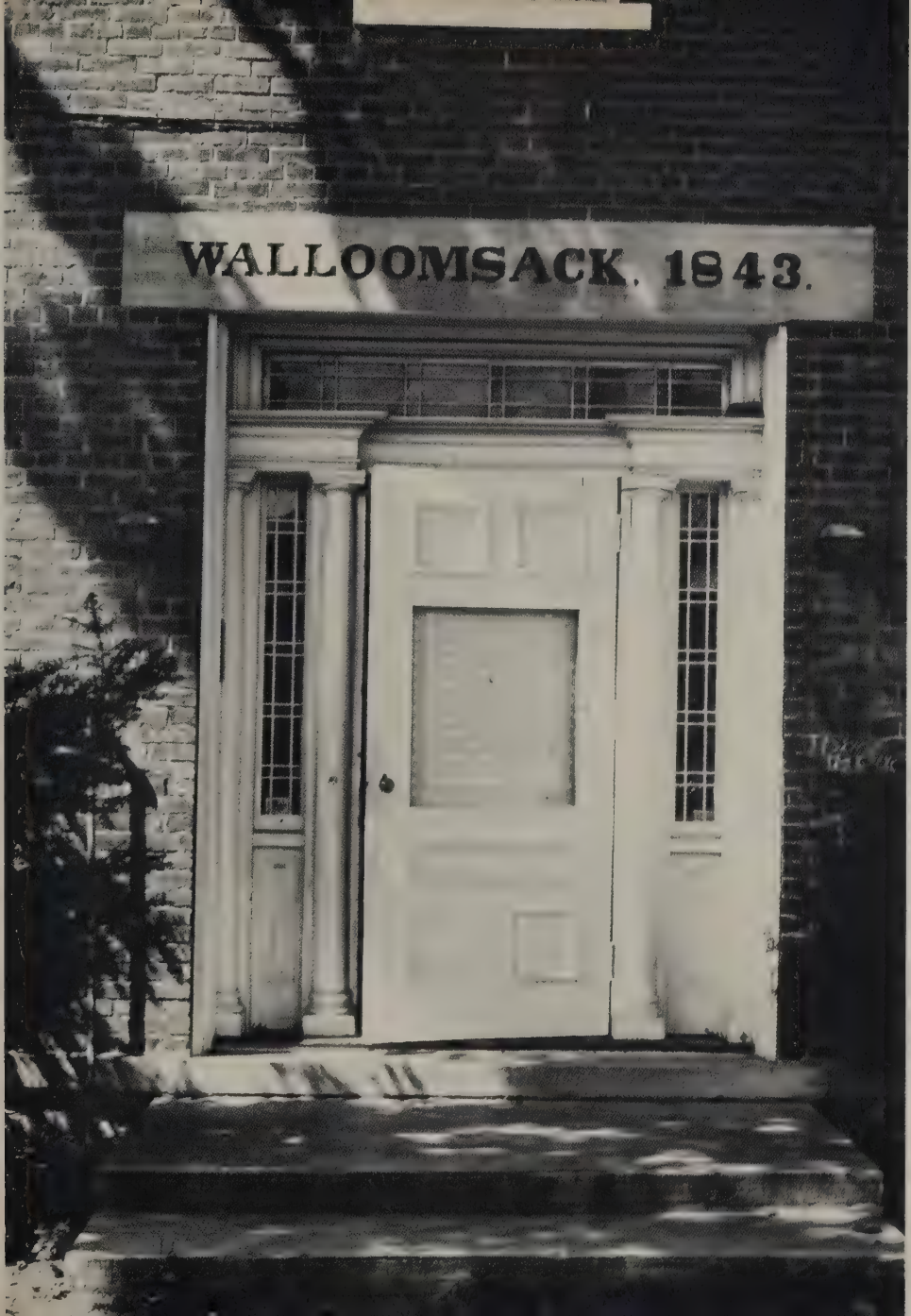
BETTS FARM, Brunswick, 154, Spring Avenue Extension
probably built in the 1820s; sunburst motif in gable

BEVERWYCK, Rensselaer, Washington Avenue Extension
built in 1839–43; Frederic Diaper, architect
original owner: William Paterson van Rensselaer
now a Franciscan monastery

THE MANSION, Sand Lake (village), 43 and 66
built in 1840
original owner: N. Y. State Senator Albert R. Fox

STONE SCHOOL HOUSE, Hoosick, 7 and 22
built in 1842; original owner: school district 16

WALLOOMSACK HOUSE, Hoosick, Walloomsac, 67
built in 1843; original owner: Seymour Gooding


WALLOOMSACK. 1843.

FORD–McKINLEY HOUSE, Schaghticoke, Melrose, 5
built in 1847; original owner: McChesney; wooden lintels

GOODING HOUSE, Hoosick, 22 near County line
built in 1840; original owner: Nicholas Gooding

FARM HOUSE, Brunswick, 7, near Haynersville
facade ca 1845 in front of much older farm house

VAN DEN BERG HOUSE, North Greenbush, 319 Bloomingrove Drive
built ca 1850; original owner: Rutger van den Berg

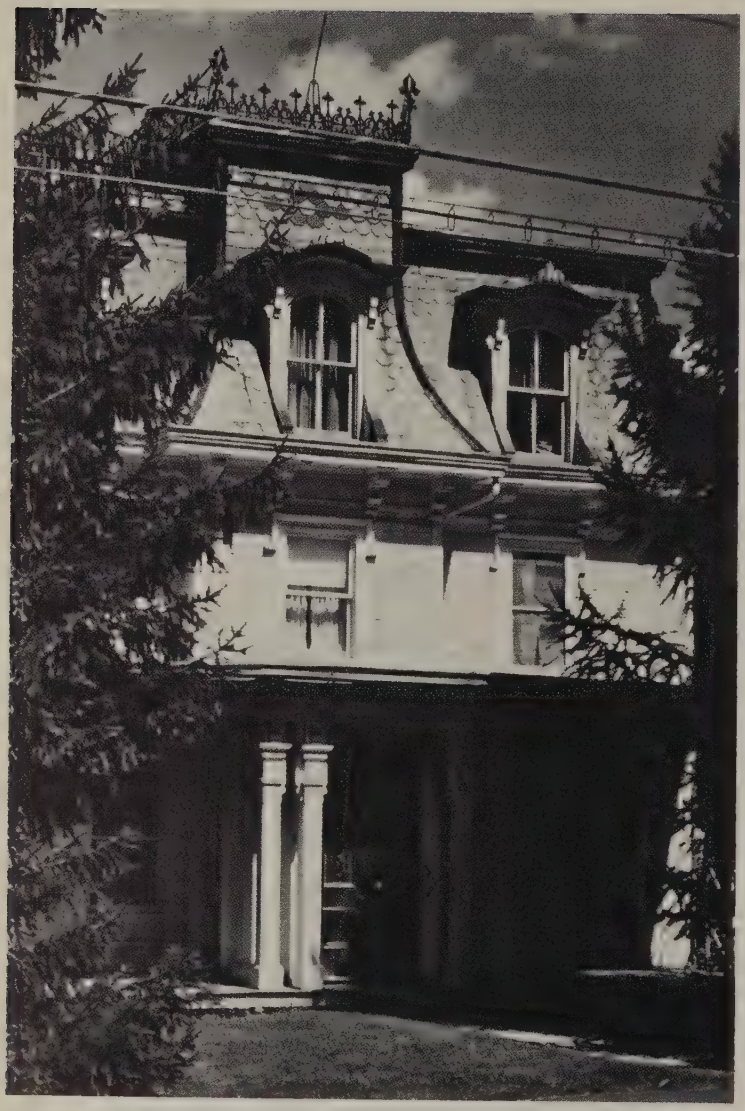
OCTAGON HOUSE, Hoosick Falls, 9 River Street
built in 1853 by its owner Ezra Robinson Estabrook

DELANEY HOTEL, North Hoosick, 22 and 67
probably built in the 1850s; original owner: Eldred
projecting third story contained ballroom

GENET SCHOOL, East Greenbush, 9 J and 46 (Hays Road)
built in 1850; abandoned in 1940; in ruins

IRWIN HOUSES, East Greenbush, 151, Red Mill Road

Several residences in Greenbush Heights were built ca 1860 by the Irwin Brothers. The Nally house on the left was destroyed by fire in 1964, the Levinger house is still intact, and while the McCabe house has lost its tower by fire, it retains other interesting details.

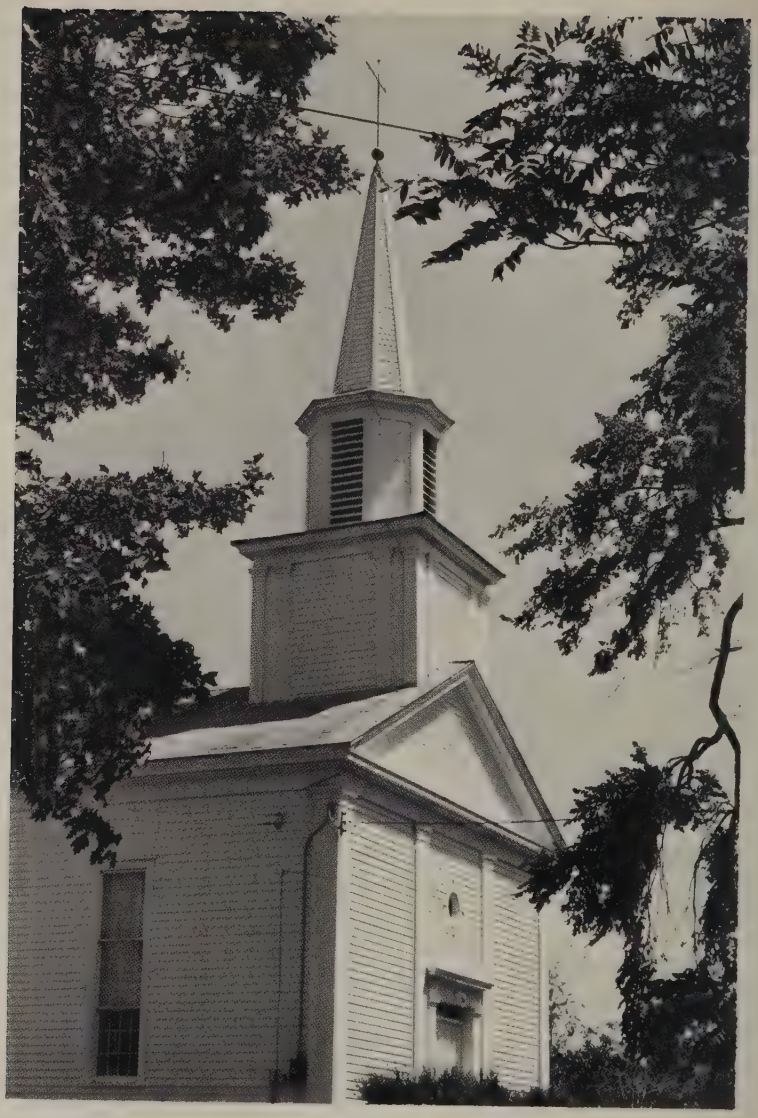


WHITE FUNERAL PARLOR, Berlin (village), Main Street
original owner: Rogers

DALEY HOUSE, Poestenkill (village), 154
presumably built before 1863; being restored

162

ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Hoosick (village), 7
built in 1864



164

WHITE CHURCH, Brunswick (village), White Church Lane
built in 1813, rebuilt in 1863; denomination: Presbyterian

165

FEDERATED CHURCH, Stephentown, Garfield, 50
built in 1868; formerly Presbyterian

MILL HOUSES, Schaghticoke (village), East Street
presumably built ca 1870

BUTTON HOUSE, Schaghticoke (village), 40, South Main Street
built in 1864 from pattern book; original owner: Grant

VANDERBILT HOUSE, Stephentown (village), 43 near 22
170 built in 1871 as a railroad hotel; being restored

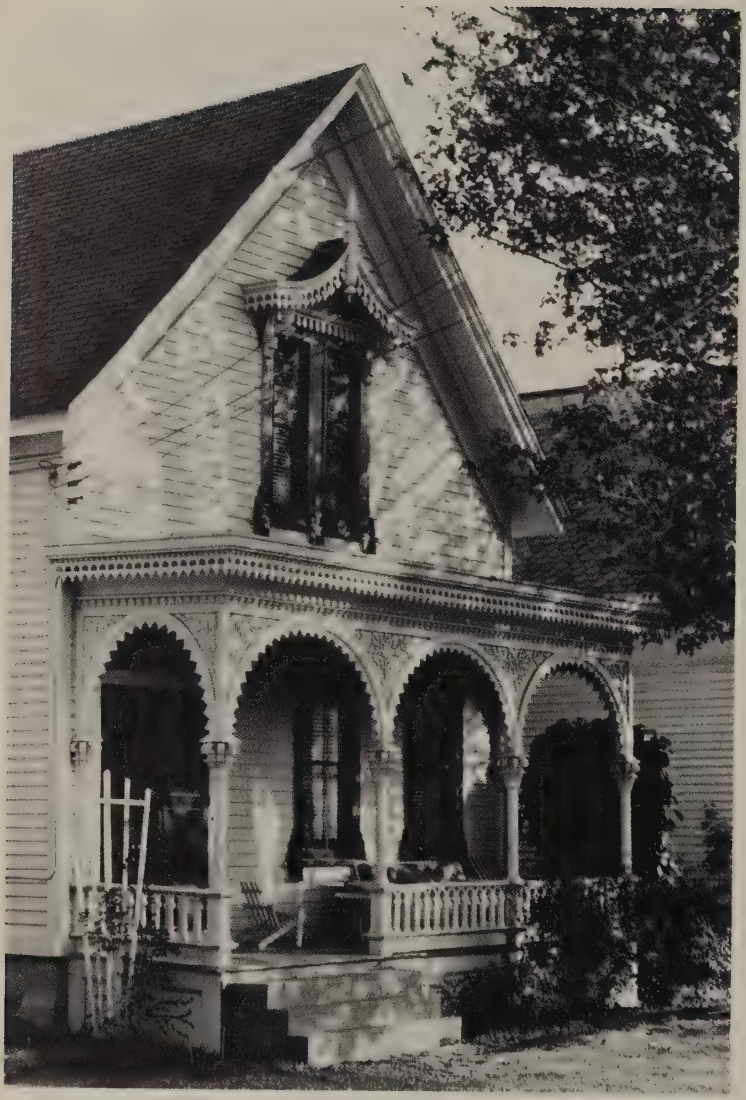
RAILROAD STATION, Pittstown, Johnsonville
probably built in the early 1880s

BOSTON & MAIN VIADUCT, Schaghticoke, 71, East of Reynolds
built in the 1860s

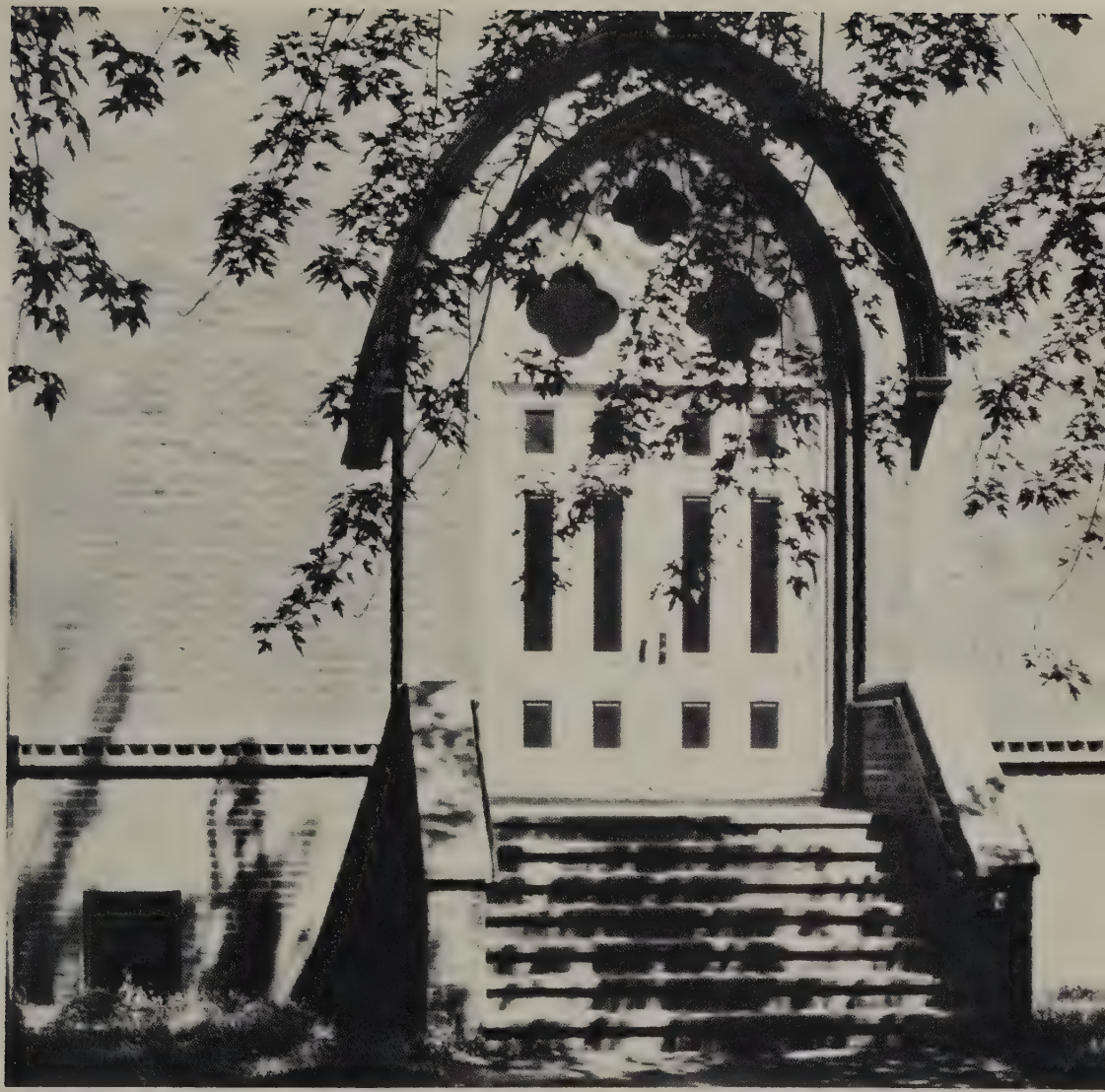
SCHOOLHOUSE, Grafton, village green
built in 1887; original owner: school district 5

SCHOOL, Brunswick, Eagle Mills, 7 at Moonlawn Road
built in 1881; original owner: school district 2

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Hoosick Falls, Main Street
built in 1884; rebuilt after 1909 fire



HOUGHTON HOUSE, Sand Lake, West Sand Lake, 43
presumably ca 1885; original owner: Frederick Houghton



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, Valley Falls, Charles Street
built in 1889; denomination: Roman Catholic

EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Pittstown, Raymertown, 7
built in 1891; windows derived from Gothic masonry arch

FAITH MILL, Sand Lake, Averill Park, 6
rebuilt in 1904 after fire

COLLAR FACTORY, Poestenkill (village), 154
original owner: Lynd; machines were run by water from tank above

REFORMED CHURCH, Nassau (village) Church Street
built in 1901

COMMENTS

Architecture is very much concerned with interior space, but the nature of this study made it necessary to deal only with the exterior of buildings.

This publication cannot be considered to be an inclusive listing of architectural treasures in Rensselaer County. To show this, one need only mention such commercial structures in Troy as

15 First Street, the former Frear store with its grand stairway, and the Pioneer Savings and Loan Association building, such Troy churches as Holy Cross, Woodside, First Baptist, and St. Paul's, and memorial chapels, vaults and grave markers in such cemeteries as Oakwood and the Presbyterian Cemetery in East Greenbush. Throughout the county there are numerous residences, churches, industrial buildings and inns that are worthy of preservation, and there are a vast number of buildings with fine entrances and remarkable architectural details such as columns, lintels and cornices in cast iron, terra cotta and stone.

There may seem to be a contradiction between an apparent abundance of good architecture and the claim that its losses constitute a genuine crisis. One must keep in mind that the examples shown here were gathered from a large geographical area that has been settled for centuries. Certain kinds of buildings peculiar to this region are virtually extinct, and destruction has been increasing at a terrible rate.

Some buildings are worth saving for reasons other than their architectural distinction. This modest house, for example, should be preserved because it was the home of Dr. Smith Boughton, who played an important role in history as leader in the Anti Rent Wars, the rebellion against feudalism in the United States.

There is a wide variety of barns in the area which have been considerably influenced by designed architecture. Many such structures are deteriorating, left abandoned or being removed as a result of changes in agriculture.

The practicality of farm structures is often expressed in the strong forms of sheds and silos, and in simplicity of detailing. There are still many fine examples of vernacular architecture throughout the county.

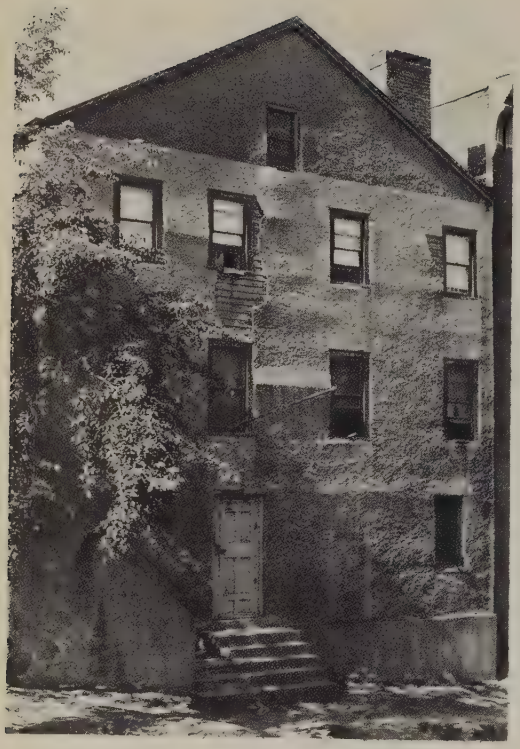
A farm in Poestenkill had been neglected for decades, and seemed beyond any hope of repair. Plans were made to let it be destroyed in an exercise by the local volunteer fire company, but the house has been restored.

When the search for new uses of good buildings is approached with imagination, it can have a variety of unexpected benefits. An abandoned church in Stephentown now serves as a youth center.

Gingerbread is endangered by the tendency to preserve only the very old. Now that modern architecture has become respectable, we can look back on the Victorian era with detachment, and enjoy its exuberance. The exterior trim is on the Lyon house in Nassau.

The Boradaile restaurant was built in 1888 as a residence overlooking North Troy. It boasts of the wealth of its original owner. The interior is elaborately decorated with ornate carvings. Its ostentatiousness makes this building an architectural and sociological curiosity.

The Mylett house on Tibbetts Avenue in Troy deserves to be saved as an example of a vanishing type.



Not all buildings that have housed a famous person should be preserved. It has been proposed to move the home of Samuel ("Uncle Sam") Wilson into a park when the neighborhood is torn down. Aside from the question if it benefits a city to concentrate its pride on a man whose contribution to history is dubious and accidental, the building is undistinguished, and derives what architectural meaning it has from its context: its relation to the adjacent structures and the sloping street. It should not be converted into an isolated shrine.

When the Thompson Company had its building on River Street in Troy sandblasted, interesting details emerged. Several other restorations have been accomplished by law firms, by churches, and by individual residents. With private funds and official cooperation, trees have been planted in downtown streets of Troy. All such acts contribute to civic pride. There is a direct relationship between community attitudes and crime, between cultural life and economic growth. Awareness, interest, vision and initiative will result in further improvements.

This study deals mostly with individual buildings, but they do not exist in a vacuum. They are affected by their surroundings, and many excellent buildings need the continued presence of other structures which give them scale and context. Isolated landmarks do not make a town. Buildings are only important to the extent that they contribute to the total urban experience. The finest structure can be lost in a bad environment, and the most beautiful cities in the world depend on large numbers of undistinguished buildings. While it is essential to keep the outstanding structures, it is equally necessary to retain or restore neighborhoods that can contribute to the city. This requires the repair and maintenance of many ordinary structures as well as the preservation of the rare landmarks.

A row of houses on Third Avenue in the Lansingburgh section of Troy shows that simple, well kept structures with trees and a pleasant sidewalk can make an attractive spot that is compatible with modern living.

It is easy to overlook the merits of a neglected structure, but even buildings that look ready for the bulldozer can often be redeemed. Amazing things can be accomplished with paint brush and broom, and there is a vast number of buildings that can be restored by appropriate remodeling. To preserve buildings that have historical interest or a desirable character is not to yield to nostalgia, but to recognize cultural, economic, and sociological advantages.

Historical districts can be established, and they need not be limited to very old buildings. Neither history nor architecture stop at a certain date, and communities would do well to preserve areas from different periods. Even within the same district old and new can successfully coexist and enhance one another. Every effort should be made to prevent such areas from becoming isolated and precious.

On Second Street in Troy is a row of houses that could be restored to become a most desirable residential area.

Tradition can provide stability, stimulate pride, and even inspire bold innovation, but if misused it can become an obstacle to progress. Attempts to save many buildings for which no real function is proposed can hinder important preservation efforts, just as unnecessary demolitions cause opposition to desirable renewal projects. There is need to recognize such dangers, and to be aware of the magnificent opportunities in preservation and in new construction.

This book deals with only one limited phase of architecture, but what happens in preservation reflects our attitudes, and influences our actions in other fields. All aspects of community life are related, and successes in one area tend to spread to others. A spirit of improvement can be just as catching as the disease of indifference and neglect.

When a good building is destroyed, the loss is both real and irrevocable, and this is not only true for very old structures, but

for those of any period. Self interest, as well as an obligation to the future, demands care for our natural and our man made resources. Laws are needed to let the public good take precedence over private profit.

Concern should not be limited to a few landmarks, but must include the total environment. Plans for the region should be based on the aims of our society, and the fact that such considerations are immeasurable does not reduce their validity. No matter how useful, statistics are no substitute for long range goals, and computers cannot provide the value judgments essential to sound decisions.

There is no question that we have the means to improve the quality of our visual environment. What we decide to do depends on our values. We will be judged by what we tear down and by what we build. It is important but not sufficient to protect our heritage: we must also create a legacy of our own.

RECOMMENDED READING

CHRISTMAN, Henry — *Tin Horns and Calico*
New York; 1961

HAYNER, Rutherford — *Troy and Rensselaer County New York, A History*
New York; 1925

SYLVESTER, Nathaniel B. — *History of Rensselaer Co., New York*
Philadelphia; 1880

WEISE, Arthur James — *City of Troy and Its Vicinity*
Troy; 1886

WEISE, Arthur James — *Firemen and Fire Departments of Troy, N. Y.*
Albany; 1895

WEISE, Arthur James — *History of Lansingburgh*
Troy; 1877

WEISE, Arthur James — *History of The City of Troy*
Troy; 1876

WEISE, Arthur James — *Troy's One Hundred Years 1789–1889*
Troy; 1891

DATE DUE

MAY 11 '03			
NOV -7 2008			

#47-0108 Peel Off Pressure Sensitive

3 5134 00175669 7

NA 730 .N4 F6
Foerster, Bernd.
Architecture worth saving in
Rensselaer County, New York

[redacted] FOERSTER
Architecture worth saving
in Rensselaer County, New York.

22Jy69

[redacted]

DEMCO

Y0-BYX-143